



## Schostak Brothers and Company and the Sterling Group for the Rehabilitation of Merchants Row, Detroit

Schostak Brothers and the Sterling Group have set an excellent example for creating vibrant mixed-use neighborhoods as exciting places to live and work, a component of the Cool Cities initiative. The multi-building Lofts of Merchants Row is the largest single residential rehab project in downtown Detroit and exemplifies the loft conversion projects that have occurred in several historic buildings in the downtown area in recent years. The rehabilitation of five former department store buildings into market-rate loft apartments brings attractive living units to the heart of Detroit. These buildings on Woodward Avenue in the Lower Woodward Avenue Historic District were vacant for over twenty years and were blight on Detroit's "Main Street." The district is both listed in the National Register of Historic Places and designated as a local historic district by the city of Detroit. The rehabilitated buildings range from an 1886 elaborate cast iron front building to a ten-story white decorative terra-cotta-clad building built in 1923. The project began in the summer of 2003 and was completed in the late fall of 2004. Now known as Merchants Row, the five buildings contain 157 loft apartments with the street-level storefronts retaining a commercial presence on Woodward Avenue, known historically as Detroit's premier shopping district. The project also included construction of a nine-story parking structure, designed to fit into and complement the historic streetscape. This \$33 million project was assisted with both state and federal historic preservation tax credits combined with Brownfield cleanup tax credits available through the Michigan Economic Development Corporation.

The Lofts of Merchants Row transformed Lower Woodward Avenue. The project is sure to spur redevelopment of the surrounding buildings and additional investment in the city of Detroit.



# Historic Preservation in Michigan